

SCORING – WHO WINS?

Bridge is a competitive game so a winner is usually determined. There are a variety of ways to score a bridge game (Duplicate, Chicago, Rubber). First, let's look at the aspects they have in common. Your score on a single hand depends on whether or not you are the declaring side or the defending side. Declarer's side scores when declarer takes enough tricks to fulfill his contract. In that case, the score is composed of a trick score plus any applicable bonuses. The defending side scores when declarer goes down (doesn't take enough tricks to fulfill his contract.) In that case, the defenders collect a penalty that depends on the number of tricks declarer failed by. Each section below provides a quick reference on how to calculate the applicable scores.

VULNERABILITY is a state that is either assigned to you or earned based on what happened previously. Vulnerability affects penalties and many bonuses. To make it easier to find scores, scoring charts are color coded when vulnerability matters. Green is for non-vulnerable scores and penalties and red is for vulnerable scores and penalties.

TRICK SCORES

When you make your contract, you get a trick score for every trick over book (the first 6 tricks) you took. In most denominations, all tricks are equal, but in notrump the first trick scores 10 points more. Trick scores are shown in the chart below.

Tricks beyond book	Minors (♣ and ♦)	Majors (♥ and ♠)	Notrump (NT)
First trick	20	30	40
Each subsequent trick	20	30	30

GAME: Any contract having a trick score of 100 or more is a *game contract*. In all forms of scoring except Rubber Bridge, game contracts earn a bonus.

PARTSCORES: Any contract with a trick score of less than 100 is called a *partscore contract*. In some forms of scoring, partscore contracts collect a small bonus.

BONUSES FOR MAKING YOUR CONTRACT

In addition to the trick score you get for making your contract, you may score a bonus for bidding and making certain contracts. These bonuses are scored in the column belonging to declarer's side. In Rubber Bridge scoring, there are no game or partscore bonuses, however slam bonuses are scored.

	Not Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Partscore (not at (Rubber Bridge)	50	50
Game (not at (Rubber Bridge)	300	500
Small slam (6 bid) Add to game bonus if applicable	500	750
Grand slam (7 bid) Add to game bonus if applicable	1000	1500

MAKING A DOUBLED OR REDOUBLED CONTRACT

Scoring is more complex when declarer makes a doubled or redoubled contract. Changes are as follows:

- Game and slam bonuses are given as usual. However, a contract of 2♠ doubled is treated like a 4♠ contract and scores the game bonus if you make it. That is not true for earning a slam bonus. A contract of 3♠ doubled gives you a game bonus, but not a slam bonus. You must actually bid 6 to score a slam bonus.
- Calculate your tricks score in two parts: In a doubled contract, the trick score for the contract you bid and made is double the usual trick score. In a redoubled contract, the trick score is multiplied by 4. For example 3♥ making usually gives you a trick score of 90. 3♥ doubled making gives you a trick score of 180. 3♥ redoubled making gives you a trick score of 360.
- Overtricks are given more than their trick value. The chart below tells you how to score doubled and redoubled overtricks. Notice that vulnerability is an issue in these scores.

	Not vulnerable	Vulnerable
Doubled	100 each	200 each
Redoubled	200 each	400 each

- **INSULT:** You also score a bonus of 50 points for making a doubled contract and 100 points for making a redoubled contract. This is referred to as the insult. (How dare they double you?)

PENALTIES FOR NOT MAKING YOUR CONTRACT

When you fail to make your contract, you pay your opponents a penalty for each *undertrick* (each trick you are short of making your contract). The following table shows the penalties for all forms of scoring. Penalties are scored in the defenders' column on the scoresheet.

Tricks Down	Not Vulnerable		Vulnerable	
	Not Doubled	Doubled	Not Doubled	Doubled
1	50	100	100	200
2	100	300	200	500
3	150	500	300	800
4	200	800	400	1100
Additional Tricks down	200+ 50/trick	800+300/trick	400+100/trick	1100+300/trick

DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Duplicate scoring is used at tournaments and bridge clubs as well as in a variety of groups. All information shown in the above charts applies in duplicate scoring. Follow the instructions to get a single point total for each deal. The same deal is played at each table and your score is compared with everyone else's score on the same hand. The objective is to do better than any other pair holding the same cards as you hold. If you have an unlucky card day and never get many points, you can still win a duplicate game because all people being compared to you have the same bad hands.

CHICAGO 4-DEAL BRIDGE

Four players cut to determine the dealer. The highest card deals. You can also use this cut to determine partners with the two highest cards as one pair and the two lowest cards as the other pair. Some groups might opt for a set partner for the entire session. Two decks are often used. It is proper to offer the deck to the player on your right to cut before dealing. As dealer deals the cards, his partner shuffles the other deck and places it to his right to be ready for the next dealer. Players should not pick up their cards until all 52 cards have been dealt.

Vulnerability is assigned for each round by the sponsoring group, often in the following manner:

Hand 1 – nobody vulnerable

Hands 2 and 3 – dealer's side vulnerable

Hand 4 – both sides vulnerable

If 6 deals per round are played: Deal 5 – nobody vulnerable; Deal 6 – both vulnerable

If a hand is passed out, the same dealer takes the already shuffled pack and deals again.

Score each deal using the charts previously shown in this reference section.

After 4 deals, players often change partners. When only 4 players are present, each player plays 4 hands with each other player. In a larger group, some players will be instructed to change tables. Each player keeps his own total score adding up scores accumulated in each round of 4 hands. At the end of the session, the player with the highest total wins. Some groups contribute to a kitty with money prizes for the winners and perhaps other prizes (such as the first pair to bid and make a slam or a booby prize.)

RUBBER BRIDGE

Rubber Bridge is another form of bridge that is played at home. Use the same guidelines for dealing and cutting as discussed above under Chicago 4 Deal Bridge. Vulnerability is earned in Rubber Bridge. On the first deal, neither side is vulnerable. Subsequent vulnerability depends on whether your side has made a game. If you have, you are vulnerable until the end of the rubber.

A rubber ends once a team scores two games. The scoring in Rubber Bridge is somewhat different from Duplicate and Chicago. The following work just as described in the preceding charts in this reference:

Trick Scores whether doubled or undoubled

Slam Bonuses

Scores for Overtricks

Penalties

There are no game or partscore bonuses. When scoring a doubled or redoubled contract, you score the trick score including overtricks and the insult.

There are a couple of new bonuses in Rubber Bridge: Honors and a bonus for ending the rubber.

RUBBER BRIDGE BONUSES

HONORS: Either the declaring side or the defending side (even dummy) can score the honor bonus:

100 points for holding 4 of the top 5 trump cards all in one hand.

150 points for holding the top 5 trump cards all in one hand.

150 points for holding all 4 aces in one hand in notrump.

RUBBER BONUS: The pair scoring the second game of the rubber ends the rubber and scores a bonus, which depends on whether the other side has scored a game yet. The bonus is:

500 if the opponents became vulnerable (scored a game during the rubber.)

700 if the opponents never became vulnerable (did not score a game during the rubber.)

SCORING ABOVE AND BELOW THE LINE

The scorekeeper either uses a special Rubber Bridge scoresheet or a plain sheet of paper divided into 2 columns with a heavy horizontal line drawn about halfway down the page. This horizontal line is referred to as “the line.” Certain scores are written above the line and certain scores are written below the line. The columns are labeled “We” (for scorekeeper’s side’s scores) and “They” (for scores belonging to the other pair.)

BELOW THE LINE: Any time declarer makes his contract, place the trick score for that contract exactly below the line in declarer’s column. Do not include scores for overtricks.

ABOVE THE LINE: All other scores — overtricks, undertrick penalties collected from the opponents, slam bonuses, honors, insults, and the rubber bonus — are all scored above the line.

The reason for separating scores in this way is to know when a side has made a game! In Rubber Bridge, a game can be built over the course of two or more deals. Any two or more partscores that total to 100 points give your side credit for bidding a game provided that these partscores were not interrupted by your opponents scoring a game. Partscores making a game may be interrupted by partscores by the opponents provided it doesn’t finish a game for them.

When a pair scores a game whether in one hand or over the course of two or more hands, a less heavy horizontal line is drawn with an arrow pointing toward the column belonging to the side that scored the game. This line indicates who is vulnerable and also says that both pairs have to start building a game from scratch.

ENDING A RUBBER: The rubber officially ends when one side scores two games. At this point the rubber bonus is given to that side and the two columns are tallied. The pair with the most points wins the rubber. Note that it is possible for a side to end the rubber and score the rubber bonus but lose the rubber if they have paid too many penalties (especially if doubled) to their opponents.

After a rubber ends, players can quit or start a new rubber with a new partner or the same partner, depending on the group’s choice.

UNFINISHED RUBBER: Depending on the cards and the bidding, a rubber can be over in as few as two hands or it can take a very long time to end. Sometimes, players have to leave and it’s necessary to end a rubber prematurely. If only one pair had started building a new game, that side scores a 100-point bonus. If one side has a game and the other side doesn’t, the side with the game scores a 300-point bonus. Then total each column to determine the winners of the rubber. (Note neither of these special bonuses is scored if both pairs would score the bonus since it would not affect the winners. However, if more than one table is in play and scores will be compared among all pairs at all tables, both pairs score these bonuses if they qualify.)

Rubber Bridge scoring may seem quite complicated, but it isn’t bad once you get used to it. Playing Rubber Bridge does affect your bidding since you don’t want to bid too high and go down when you only need 30 points to finish a game. On the other hand, you could lose a slam bonus by not showing a good hand. Bridge teachers don’t recommend Rubber Bridge because players often don’t bid their hands to the full extent but many players still enjoy playing Rubber Bridge. Following the imaginary rubber discussed below will help you become more familiar with Rubber Bridge scoring.

SCORING A SAMPLE RUBBER

Read the explanation column to follow the progression of an imaginary rubber. Start right below THE LINE to see how the rubber was played from Deal #1 through Deal #9, which ended the rubber. Notice that we start scoring both above and below the line at THE LINE. Scores move in sequence away from THE LINE.

WE	THEY	Explanation
500		Rubber Bonus for winning 2 games. It's 500 instead of 700 because your opponents scored a game.
120		Deal #9: Your score for 4 overtricks in 1♥ making 5.
30		Deal #8: You bid 1NT and made 2. The overtrick is scored above the line.
	60	Deal #7 overtricks your opponents scored in 2♠ making 4.
30		Deal #6: You bid 1NT and made 2. The overtrick is scored above the line
200		Deal #5: Your vulnerable opponents went down 2 in 3♠.
	50	Deal #2: You went down one in 2♣ not vulnerable and paid a 50-point penalty.
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60		Deal #1: You bid 2♥ and won 8 tricks. There were no overtricks so the entire score goes below the line.
		Deal #2: You went down one in 2♣. Nothing is scored below the line because you did not make your contract. The penalty you pay your opponents is scored above the line.
	120	Deal #3: Your opponents bid and made a 4♥ game. There were no overtricks so their entire score goes below the line. They are now vulnerable. Notice the line below points toward their scoring column. Your 60 points no longer count toward building a 100- point game total. You have to start from scratch.
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100		Deal #4: You bid 3NT and took 9 tricks. There were no overtricks so the entire score goes below the line. That makes you vulnerable and have a line pointing toward your scoring column too. One more game ends the rubber
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		Deal #5: Your opponents bid 3♠ and went down 2. Nothing is scored below the line because the opponents didn't make their contract. The penalty you score goes above the line.
40		Deal #6: You bid 1NT and made 2. The trick score for the 1NT you bid is scored here below the line. The overtrick is scored above the line. Only what you bid counts toward building a game.
	60	Deal #7: Your opponents bid 2♠ and made 4. Only the score for the 2♠ they bid goes below the line. The rest is scored above the line. You got lucky – they would have ended the rubber if they had bid and made 4♠.
40		Deal #8: You bid 1NT and made 2. This is the trick score for your bid. Now you have 80 points toward your game. A 2NT bid would have let you reach 100 points total in partscores to end the rubber.
30		Deal #9: You bid 1♥ and made 5. The trick score for your bid of 1♥ goes below the line, the overtricks go above the line. You were conservative because you only needed 20 points to build your second game and end the rubber.
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1150	290	Totaling each column indicates that you won by a landslide. Congratulations!